

# LABOUR

ORGANISATION

**DECEMBER 1946**

Volume 26 \* Number 297

Price Fourpence

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## SITUATIONS VACANT

**BARROW-IN-FURNESS D.L.P.**—Applications are invited for the full-time post of **Agent and Secretary**. Salary and conditions in accordance with national agreement. Application forms may be obtained from the **Secretary, J. N. Hexham, Barrow Labour Party, Whittaker Street, Barrow-in-Furness**, and must be returned not later than December 21st, 1946.

**ECCLES D.L.P.**—Applications are invited for the position of **Agent**. Conditions and salary as per national agreement. Forms to be obtained from and returned to **Miss E. M. Porter, 8 Deans Road, Swinton, Lancs.**, by 21st December, 1946.

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**DULWICH D.L.P.**—Applications are invited for the post of **Full-time Agent**. Salary and conditions in accordance with national agreement. Forms upon which application is to be made can be obtained from the **Secretary, Dulwich Labour Party, 9 Grove Vale, London, S.E.22**, to whom they must be returned not later than 31st December, 1946.

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# The Labour Organiser

PUBLISHED BY THE LABOUR PARTY, TRANSPORT HOUSE, SMITH SQUARE, LONDON, S.W.1

Vol. 26. No. 297

DECEMBER, 1946

Price Fourpence  
5/- per annum, post free

## THE BY-ELECTIONS

### Inter-Party Co-operation is Essential

By R. T. WINDLE, National Agent

The Labour Government has gone through its first session in Parliament without losing a single seat in the by-elections. That is a great achievement indeed, as not since 1874 in Disraeli's time has any Government held all its seats in the year after a General Election.

Nevertheless, I think we would all agree that the Party and the Government will have to fight hard to maintain this fine record in the days ahead. I think we can leave the Government to do its part in retaining the confidence of the electorate.

*But what I am anxious to impress upon all organisers, agents and key workers is that we must go into each and every by-election campaign with the maximum efficiency and energy. Any by-election may be regarded as a vote of confidence or a vote of no confidence in the Government; by-elections can also have important international repercussions.*

How best can we deploy our forces in any by-election and maintain the Government's fine record? I think most people would agree with me that few constituency parties are equipped, either in personnel or otherwise, to carry through a present-day high-pressure by-election campaign with their own unaided resources.

#### Help Your Neighbour!

That means it must be the bounden duty of neighbouring parties to lend the maximum possible assistance to any Divisional Labour Party which is faced with a by-election fight. In Boroughs where there are several divisions, each Divisional Party can and should mobilise its full forces for the fight.

In rural areas the problem is not so easy. But here again much can be done if every village party pulls its weight; if groups from other constituencies are organised to go in to the parts of the constituency nearest to

## PADDINGTON

Paddington is a prime example of how parties which are fighting by-elections need the help and co-operation of their neighbouring parties. We got that help and co-operation in Paddington, and the result exceeded our expectations. Remember that the Tory Party threw everything they could into the Paddington fight. Yet we won. The lesson of Paddington must not be lost in the campaigns which lie ahead.

R. T. WINDLE.

them, and if skilled use is made of all the available resources.

At Head Office we will give the fullest possible assistance to any party faced with a by-election fight. That assistance will cover organising, propaganda and publicity.

*It is difficult for Head Office to maintain a staff purely for by-elections. There are periods in which no by-elections take place, which are often followed by periods when a number of by-elections run together, and it is better to be able to organise teams of by-election workers headed by constituency agents from other constituencies, who would be able, at reasonably short notice, to take charge of by-elections as they occur.*

In some districts this has been done with considerable success. During the years when I was the London District Organiser of the Party, we used to mobilise agents and key workers into

a very formidable by-election team, and I know that before the war this was happening in other areas.

### Releasing Agents

All these considerations prompt me to the conclusion that better results would be achieved by the release of a limited number of constituency agents from neighbouring parties for work in the by-elections. Agents coming straight from Party activities in their own constituencies bring with them experience and ability which is invaluable in a concentrated by-election campaign. I hope, therefore, that all constituency parties will co-operate in this matter and release for service their agents when needed. I know this is a big sacrifice in many cases, but we must realise that every by-election is a national fight, and not merely that of a single Constituency Party.

*In addition to the release of agents, every neighbouring party must be prepared to organise groups of voluntary workers to go to adjacent constituencies for any by-election campaign. It is the keen and enthusiastic voluntary workers who are the essential factor in any by-election fight, and without an adequate number of them disaster will follow.*

We can feel proud of Labour's by-election record, but we must remember that the fights will get more intensive from now on. The Tories, who are now re-grouping their forces after the General Election debacle, will do their utmost to break through on the by-election front.

*But given the co-operation of all constituency parties, and the skilled use of all available resources, I am confident that we shall not let the Government down in the by-elections.*

## Candidates Endorsed

The following candidatures were endorsed by the N.E.C. on, 27th November, 1946:—

Huntingdonshire: Mrs. Lucy Bradfield.

Holland-with-Boston: Mr. H. W. Lee.  
Skipper: Mr. T. J. Roberts, B.A.  
Co-operative candidate running in association with the Labour Party:  
Worcester: Mr. Jack Evans.

# Form Campaign Units!

## A Plan for Better Propaganda and Publicity

By MORGAN PHILLIPS, Secretary, The Labour Party

The need for effective Labour Party publicity has probably never been so great as it is to-day. The Labour Government is introducing social and economic changes on an unprecedented scale and, in the face of Tory misrepresentation, the reasons for and effects of the changes have to be explained to the public.

The Labour Party, being a democratic party, must carry the people with it at all stages of the transition to Socialism. Above all, we must raise the general level of political understanding as a means of winning the next General Election. Remember that campaigns are won between elections.

### Head Office Plans

Head Office is doing its utmost to raise the standard of Party literature, which is one of the essential media of publicity. In the first place, attention is being given to the publications intended primarily for Party members. Thus the *Labour Organiser*, *Labour Woman*, *Labour Press Service*, *Labour Party Bulletin*, the *Labour Discussion Series* are being continued and improved, and are being joined by one new arrival in the *Labour Forum*, which will be expanded in size, scope and circulation as soon as paper becomes available, and by another in the separate Local Government Section of the *Bulletin*.

In addition, Handbooks such as the Local Government Handbook and the forthcoming Labour Party Year Book will be published regularly, along with a new series of Guides, starting with a Guide to the National Insurance Act recently published. It is also hoped to arrange for the publication of other book-size publications on policy matters.

In the second place, the quality and quantity of popular publications for public distribution is being and will be further raised. Material for local and Parliamentary by-elections, for membership campaigns, for special occasions such as the completion of the first year of Labour Government and for general popular use have been prepared.

*A new venture will be the publication of a popular leaflet at regular intervals on the first of every third month, starting early in 1947. Parties will be requested to place orders for this leaflet in advance, so that the time-lag between production and final distribution can be cut down. Plans are also being made for a concerted publicity campaign in the early months of 1947.*

### Train Your Publicists

But what can be done at Head Office is in itself limited. It is what is done by Party members in the localities that is really important. Indeed, the only great publicity asset of the Labour Party, with its limited resources, is the existence of local members each of whom is an actual or potential agent for spreading socialist information and ideas in the queue or the pub, the meeting or the workshop.

*The chief requirement now is for building up in each Party a group of trained publicists who can take an active and skilled part in local campaigns of all kinds, at electors and on behalf of the Labour Government.*

It is therefore suggested that Parties should form Campaign Units, whose job it would be to organise and conduct all local publicity. They should be constituted as sub-committees of the E.C. or G.M.C. and should, of course, include the D.L.P. Secretary and the Literature Secretary where there is none.

Local Parties should consider authorising the Secretary (or Literature Secretary), together with the sub-committee, to order literature from Transport House. In connection with the distribution of literature it is highly important that the Ward Committees should be informed without delay of the literature available or about to be published by Head Office.

The time-lag between despatch of instructions, advice or samples would then be cut down, and the Unit would, while carrying on a certain amount of routine work, be ready to jump into action in any emergency. Information is frequently received at Head Office

that whereas Constituency Parties and Local Parties have knowledge of our publicity services, these are not known to Ward Committees until too late for the purpose concerned.

#### Opinion "Tasters"

The Units should, so far as possible, contain local professional or amateur "experts" in journalism, lay-out, public speaking, organisation of meetings and canvassing, and a Press Officer. The Units might also contain a few people who could undertake to inform Head Office periodically of the trend of public opinion; if such a service were developed it would be of value to the National Executive in the next General Election.

*Publicity conferences and schools will be arranged in conjunction with the Regional Councils, designed to train members or would-be members of these Campaign Units.*

I want to see this proposal discussed in every Party throughout the country. Nine Points for Campaign Units (in conjunction with the Party and Ward Committees)

(1) Prepare plan of activities during the coming months, e.g., a regular series of meetings.

- (2) Form a panel of local speakers.
- (3) Secure wide publicity for meetings by handbill, poster, advertisements in local Press, personal invitations to new or would-be members.
- (4) Arrange for close contact between Unit and Editor of local paper, if any. If no Labour paper, consider issue of one within the limits of the 8 cwt. of paper allowed free of licence every four months.
- (5) Arrange for purchase and use of loudspeaker equipment, especially in rural areas.
- (6) Appoint Literature Stewards for sale of Party literature at Party and indoor and outdoor public meetings.
- (7) Organise a team of literature sellers for (i) door to door sales; (ii) sales to Party members who do not attend meetings; (iii) for linking up sales with canvassing for new individual members. Plan for methodical follow-up.
- (8) Train teams in sales and canvassing methods.
- (9) Place regular orders for Party literature.

*For further information on any of the above Points write to the Party Secretary at Transport House.*

## New Appointments

*More important new appointments to Labour Party organising and agency posts have been announced.*

Mr. J. T. Anson, Scottish Organiser, has been appointed Organiser and Secretary of the Yorkshire (East and West Ridings) Regional Council in succession to Mr. A. L. Williams, the new Assistant National Agent.

This follows the appointment of Mr. J. W. Raisin, East Lewisham agent, to the office of London District Organiser.

Four new agency appointments were made by the National Executive Committee at their meeting on October 30.

Mr. Ivor T. Brown, agent at Kingston-on-Thames, is to be agent at Colchester. He is 37.

Mr. P. Roddy, acting secretary of Gorton D.L.P., is to be agent at Gorton. He is 44.

Two young men have been appointed to the Rochdale and West Brom-

wich agencies. Mr. J. Trotter, who is 24, goes to Rochdale after having held various Party and Trade Union offices.

Mr. P. J. Elliott, who at 21 must surely be our youngest agent, has been appointed to West Bromwich. He was in the Navy from 1943-46.

Mrs. E. Nicholson succeeds her late husband as Secretary-Agent at Cleveland. She acted for her husband, who died in July, 1945, while he was in the Forces.

At the N.E.C. meeting on November 27th, two further agency appointments were made. Mr. W. Haywood, at present at Stroud, is to be agent at Dartford, Kent. He is 32. Mr. F. M. Hagger, at present hon. secretary of Huntingdonshire Party, has been appointed agent at Peterborough, Notts. He is 38.

# Salute to Our President!

**By R. STANTON, General Secretary, National Union of Labour Organisers and Election Agents**

I must open the notes this month with a grand salute to our President, Richard Montford, who this month—on Boxing Day—celebrates his eighty-ninth birthday. He still retains his active interest in the Union and is Financial Secretary of the London District, a job he has done for many years with distinguished success. Though he ought to ease off, he cannot be so persuaded, and for District Meetings and meetings of the National Executive he insists on making the journey from Welling-Lorough to London. Dick, we take our hats off to you, and hope to join with you in celebrating your century.

### Record London Meeting

London District's all-day meeting to consider the Rules and Charter proved to be a really record gathering.

Notwithstanding two vital by-elections in the London area, which prevented a number of loyal members attending, there was a large attendance throughout the day.

*Discussion was on a high level indeed and never flagged, and this was no doubt due in a large measure to the careful preparation made by the District Executive, whose detailed report was circulated by the District Secretary.*

After a first-class discussion on associate membership, the proposals contained in the News Letter were approved by a substantial majority. Hodson, of Ilford, made an outstanding statement for the District Executive on this issue. Douglas, of Reading, put the opposition point of view in a very clear and precise manner, urging that it would be dangerous to accord Union membership on a wide basis. The National Executive of the Union will be asked by London to introduce adequate safeguards.

The Charter proposals occupied most of the afternoon and detailed suggestions were made for the Executive to consider as to the conditions of service and remuneration which should be included. By the time these notes appear I hope the Union Executive will have come to conclusions on these matters. The London proposals do not

in my view ask too much. We must remember that in the past our standards have been determined in an atmosphere very different to the present.

The present power, responsibilities and prestige of the movement demand that its officers shall be given a standing and prestige in money standards adequate to their functions, and at least comparable to standards enjoyed in the Local Government service, to say nothing of those of our political opponents.

*It will, however, be essential that whatever the final demands are, we shall have behind them a united and determined membership.*

### Salary Determines Status

Following the London meeting I visited for the first time the South Wales and S. Western District meeting at Bristol. Obviously smaller on account of less membership and greater travelling difficulties, I thoroughly enjoyed the gathering, which again was discussing the Rules and Charter proposals. Here, too, was a similar spirit to that of London the day before, with sentiments of a like character being expressed. Rees, of Bristol, made an excellent case for a new outlook in regard to Agency standards which will put aside once and for all the attitude that the Agent is the office boy for the Party. I was glad to hear Clem Jones, from the chair, express the view that much depended on the salary rate we establish. With the appropriate figure won, status and prestige would follow.

South Wales also gave unanimous approval to the associate membership scheme, subject to a strengthening of the qualification clause.

### For Your Library

I have just had a note from an old member now in retirement, Charlie New, formerly of Southwark, who had a number of volumes of the "Labour Organiser" and various legal books on elections, etc., which he is anxious to dispose of at a reasonable price. Intending purchasers should write him direct at 7 Cobbett Road, Eltham, London, S.E.9.

*Profile by JACK CUTTER*

No. 5, LEN WILLIAMS

## Dick Windle's Successor

If the Central Labour College followed the American practice of allocating fraternity pins for its vintage years, the pinmakers would have been busy in the early twenties and more than one specimen of their handiwork would now be seen in Transport House, for among those entitled to wear them would be Morgan Phillips and Len Williams.

If the N.C.L.C. have not already made the claim that the Battle of 1945 was won in the lecture rooms of the Central Labour College rooms of the expect them to do so any minute now.

### Same Age-Groups

Have you noticed how many of the present administrative leaders of the Labour Party belong to the same age-group as Morgan Phillips and Len Williams? Reg Wallis, of the North-West, Tom Baxter, of the East Midlands, Jack Anson, of Scotland, and the cosmopolitan writer of this article are all products of the first few years of this century, during which the Party itself was born.

We all grew up with the Party, held humble offices, of which we were very proud, before we were out of our teens, became constituency Agents in various parts of the country about the same time and were continually running into each other at annual conferences, Agents' Union meetings, by-elections and short lists for new jobs in the Party's organisational structure.

The story of any one of us is the story of the Party. We have lived with and for the Party and the aggregate number of Party meetings we have attended, laid end to end, makes the Nuremberg Trial look like one of Frank Shepherd's Rules Revision meetings.

*Therefore it is with special pleasure that I include in this series of brief sketches a tribute to Len Williams, one of that exceedingly select group of twentieth century co-starters of my own whose steps have been along the same*

*highway and never out of rhythm during all the long and exciting march.*

Big, six-foot, likeable Len, slow of speech and quick of mind, is one of the comparatively few who have not permitted their Marxian background to destroy their sense of realism. His Materialist Conception of History has not become an Immaterialist Conception of Hysteria. If Nature placed his head an inch or two nearer the clouds than the rest of us, she also supplied him with a pair of feet well adapted for firm contact with the ground and he has kept them there.

### Won N.U.R. Scholarship

He joined the N.U.R. in Birkenhead at 15, was on strike at 16, became a branch official at 17 and at 18 became the first secretary of the Birkenhead Plebs League, which he helped to form. With such a record it was inevitable that he should win the N.U.R. Scholarship for two years at the London Labour College and equally inevitable that he should join the South Kensington Labour Party as soon as he reached London to commence his studies.

Back to Birkenhead and the railway in 1923, he became a voluntary tutor for the N.C.L.C. and lecturer for the I.L.P. and Labour Party. His voluntary status lasted only a year, for the N.C.L.C. promoted him to their staff of full-time tutor-organisers in 1924 and for about twelve years he spread I.W.C.E. from the Mersey to the Severn, with intermittent brief spells as a shop assistant, temporary T.U. Organiser, secretary of Blackburn I.L.P. and organiser of Wallasey Trades and Labour Council.

At the age of 26 he was Parliamentary candidate for Southport and, six years later, in 1935, he was candidate again, this time in Winchester, where he prepared the way for George Jeger's 1945 victory by pushing the Labour vote up to nearly 16,000 in the heart of rural Hampshire.

The following year he became secre-

tary of Leeds Labour Party and held that office for six years until the formation of the Yorkshire Regional Council of the Party in 1942 when he was the obvious selection as its Secretary and District Organiser, continuing the editorship of the "Leeds Weekly Citizen," which he assumed in 1937, until concentrated work in preparation for the 1945 general election forced him to hand on that exacting, but useful task.

#### Deserved Success

And now Len goes to Head Office and to one of the most concentrated jobs in the British Labour Movement.

accompanied with, and, I feel sure, strengthened by, all the goodwill and affection of his colleagues. Len has reached the top via the hard way. Throughout all the 28 years as railwayman, student, educationalist, shop assistant, organiser, editor, secretary and District Officer he has sought only to give service to his Party and never to seek position for himself.

*Success has come because it was deserved and not because it was either planned or calculated. Knowing that we work with him with confidence and with trust and with the warm feeling that neither will ever be misplaced.*

## D.L.P.s Hold Flower Shows

By TOM BAXTER, Organiser, East Midlands

In the Daventry, Bosworth and Louth Divisions the past year has seen three interesting events by way of Fruit, Flower and Vegetable Shows combined with Summer Demonstrations. All three proved successful, despite the weather, and over £100 profit was secured at the Bosworth event held in the small village of Higham-on-the-Hill.

Divisional Party rallies are often organised in the county town of large centres of population. Bosworth reversed the idea, the town people took coaches to the country and watched how country people organised an event. Three marquees were hired and a well-known silver prize band led off the day by marching through the village. The village turned out all right.

#### Old-Time Social

The printed schedule of prizes for the Fruit, Flower and Vegetable Show was widely distributed and on the first day two villages were in open competition as to which could carry off the most prizes and so also win the cup presented by a local firm of seedsmen.

In the evening an Old-time Social and Dance proved a great success in

the village school. During the afternoon the two Labour M.P.s made short, effective propaganda speeches. Sideshows were most effectively organised, and it was obvious that "a good time was being had by all" in the paddock at the rear of the "Oddfellows Arms," which certainly opened its doors at 6 p.m.!

The Flower Show idea was not embodied in the Summer Rally held at Crowle in Lincolnshire, but this rally, organised by the Crowle Local Party in association with branches of the Agricultural Workers' Union, certainly illustrated to other Lincolnshire Parties how to make a social, propaganda and financial success of a Labour Rally in the depths of the country.

The Daventry event was organised by the Woodford Halse Local Party and despite the shocking weather which made it essential to move the "show" into one village hall, and the rest of the proceedings into another place, the event really woke up the villages. The 1948 summer, and early autumn, should see a large number of shows and rallies in the countryside. Taking the town people to the country is a jolly good idea.

# Our Clubs are Money-Spinners

**By R. C. CHAMPION, Treasurer, Poole Labour Hall and Club, Ltd.**

*The romantic story of the Labour Club Movement in East Dorset.*

Like all backward areas in the South of England, Poole, in Dorset, had, in 1927, a small number of groups struggling for recognition and living financially from hand to mouth. At election times members of the Labour Party gave to the point of severe sacrifice. The Trade Union organisations were small and poor, in spite of Dorset being the historic home of the Tolpuddle Martyrs of world fame.

The Borough was divided into eight wards, four in Poole and four in Parkstone, and this formed the centre of the East Dorset Division. Meetings in Poole were held in a tiny Co-op. Hall, but notice to quit was given to carry out extensions. With no home and only £8 cash in hand, the outlook was grim in those years of growing unemployment.

After many years of giving, the small membership decided to strike out on other lines and to ask for loans at 5% interest to build or buy proper Labour premises. First of all a careful survey was made of potential supporters, who could be expected to hire accommodation, such as Trade Unions, Co-operative Education Committee, wards and dance parties, etc.

The great plunge was taken and a large house with a two-storeyed building in the garden was bought, and rapidly converted by voluntary labour into a snug and efficient centre for the whole local Labour Movement, political, Trade Union, and social. The Divisional Secretary moved into the flat, the "home" was secure. No one was asked to give a penny, but the equity of the property, costing £1,700, was raised and a £1,000 mortgage carried at the start. Support was splendid from the very beginning, weekly dances and socials made full use of all space, with the small rooms hired for meetings, and it grew.

Soon it was apparent that expansion was urgent, and still working along the lines of calling for investment rather than giving, a limited company was

formed under the Industrial and Provident Societies Act, styled The Poole Labour Hall & Club, Ltd.—the first Management Committee being the leaders of the Poole Labour Party.

To start on the right lines the club affiliated to the Club and Institute Union, which provided model rules and a set of account books, with invaluable advice on legal matters. One condition of such companies being that all accounts must be passed by a public auditor, made it certain that complete confidence was given to investors by properly kept accounts and outside supervision, the old slipshod methods of the past simply had to go forever.

Such was the growth of this venture that a transfer to a Building Society was made possible and some £8,000 loan was raised upon the personal guarantee of six members and the pledging of the property for development. Two adjoining houses were bought, five shops erected along the whole frontage and a modern public hall (seating 600) and club erected behind.

### Profitable Canteen

The Club has a canteen which made £1,800 profit in 1945, and the membership stands at 1,500 to-day. Profit on the hall was £2,287 in 1945, and rents from shops and rooms £350, while the total assets of the company are £15,000 with about £9,500 still to be repaid to the Building Society and to members who have invested. The rate of interest was last year reduced from five per cent. to four per cent.

The foundation stone was laid by the late Rt. Hon. Arthur Henderson on the 1st September, 1934, taking the form of a memorial stone to the late Alf. (Tich) Smith and Fred J. Hopkins, both former Parliamentary Labour candidates for East Dorset. This happened at the same time as the T.U.C. centenary celebrations of the Tolpuddle Martyrs were being held at Tolpuddle, 17 miles from Poole.

That old fighter for Socialism, George Lansbury, with Hannen Swaffer, opened the hall on the 1st December following, the hall being named the Centenary Hall.

The Club grew steadily until 1939, when the effects of war caught the South Coast, but the Labour premises carried on with just one solitary incendiary through the Secretary's roof, luckily doing little damage. The Wards and Party took first priority and cashed in with dances, which were a gold mine, at the same time doing great service in entertaining soldiers and others passing through the district.

#### £3,600 Sports Ground

Having come through safely, but with 13 members killed on active service, it was determined to launch out by providing for those who returned amenities in the way of outdoor sport. To that end a splendid 12-acre site, one and a half miles north of our present Club, with frontage on two main roads, has been purchased for £3,600. The intention is to develop these 12 acres by laying out as an up-to-date sports ground and erecting another modern hall and club thereon.

A portion of the land has been released from agriculture and has already been laid out for the use of our football team. Full use will be made of this land by letting out to other teams within the district, which like many others, is very deficient in playing fields.

Still further extension is contemplated at Hamworthy, one and a half miles to the south, where a two-acre site with buildings has been negotiated at a cost of around £1,500, and when conditions permit, a club and hall for that district will be erected. It is anticipated that a membership of at least 3,000 will be secured in these three Clubs, all of which will be under one Management Committee and members will be equally members of all three of them.

At Parkstone—two miles away—a separate venture by the Labour and Trade Union Movement in the area, commenced operations a few months after the opening of our premises in 1934, and by 1935 a similar hall and club had been erected, which as a result of the experience gained at Poole, was better planned and the financial

arrangements more easily negotiated. The hall there is known as the Woodlands Hall, and already the Management Committee there has followed the lead of Poole and secured two additional sites—east and west of the central building, and a membership well over 3,000 is confidently anticipated.

#### Some Hints

To other Labour Parties contemplating similar development one may say that first there should be a clear idea of the needs and possibilities of the district. The formation of a limited company and a club. Start in a small way with voluntary workers, but ensure room to expand. It is fatal to buy property, develop it and then to find later on that your own expenditure has raised the price of the plot next door which you later on need.

Secure complete concentration of all local progressive movements in the centre so formed. Dances provide a large part of revenue, so name the hall something other than Labour, which may prejudice outside bodies from hiring it. Remember that every outside organisation using the hall will leave behind a few dance patrons if the place is good and clean, and once a dance patron they can be attracted to the Labour Movement by tact.

Finally—GOOD LUCK.

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## PARTY CONVERSATION

# 40 Years a Party Secretary

By COLIN MacPHEE

News to hand of a really wonderful evening in the Potteries—the occasion of the presentation to Mr. G. H. Meir to mark his 40 years' service as Secretary of the Stoke-on-Trent Central Party.

Some two thousand people packed the hall where the ceremony took place, which is surely an eloquent tribute to the popularity of one of the most respected figures in the Midlands Labour Movement. Lord Shepherd, who made the presentation, handed over a wallet and a cheque for nearly £400 to Mr. Meir.

George Meir has played an immense part in the public life of the Potteries over the past forty years. He has acted as Election Agent in practically all its constituencies and, like so many of Labour's early pioneers, he has long been an enthusiastic and effective lay preacher. Although not actually a member of the Stoke Council, he has taken a big share in moulding the policies of its Labour Group.

The jubilant atmosphere at the presentation ceremony was heightened by the news of Labour's big gains in the Stoke elections.

\* \* \*

### First-Rate Special

Yes, they sang the "Red Flag" at Eastbourne Town Hall on election night—who would have believed in pre-war days that this coast resort could have been won for Labour? Behind the victory lay a great deal of hard, solid preparatory work on the part of the local D.L.P.

An example of this is the really first-rate Election Special they issued on the eve of the poll. A four-pager filled with informative local and national material, the "Eastbourne Militant" packed a hefty propaganda punch, and local Party officials consider it did them a power of good on Polling Day.

These Election Specials are expensive and take a deal of producing, but they undoubtedly pay good dividends. Even parties with limited resources might well consider producing one in their next campaign. The Eastbourne paper was produced by one or two enthusiastic amateurs, working in their spare

time, and without previous journalistic experience. But nevertheless they turned out an attractive and informative publication.

\* \* \*

### Chepstow's Annual

From the "small and rather conservative town" of Chepstow, to quote the words of Ivor Waters, local Labour Party secretary, comes a new idea in local Party publicity.

The Chepstow Party has published a Chepstow Annual for 1947, which, as well as containing articles with a Labour viewpoint also has contributions and facts of a non-political nature about the town itself and its history. By this means it is hoped to obtain a wider readership among non-Labour people. The Annual, which will be sold at 1/-, has much interesting and informative material and should enjoy a ready sale in the district.

\* \* \*

Captain Bill Field, victor in the hectic Paddington by-election, is Editor of one of the newest local Party monthlies—the South Hammersmith Labour News.

Issue No. 1, with its bold red and black heading, is an attractive and informative effort. It has a message from Herbert Morrison, in which he gives this good advice: "Tell the truth, tell it fearlessly—only in that way will you win the confidence and respect of your readers, and add your strength and ability to the achievement of social and economic well-being in our own country, and by our example, in the world."

\* \* \*

Another good new local Party paper is the "Recorder," published by the Belper D.L.P. Copies are sold at 1d. and 2,000 are distributed monthly. The distribution is carried out by enthusiasts in each local Party.

Mr. H. Mountford, secretary of the Party, tells me that the paper, which has been going now for over a year, is extremely popular and has proved invaluable in maintaining contact between the various parties in this scattered division.

# Our Mobile Exhibition

By Mrs. SONIA WALSHAW

Rushcliffe is now partly, and in the future will be mainly a Rural Constituency. We planned our Socialist Week Campaign with this in mind.

A Trailer Caravan was equipped as a Mobile Exhibition. Outside simple posters announced the exhibition; inside the Principles, Achievements and Aims of Socialism were illustrated by pictorial statistics.

I would like to describe the Exhibition's tour . . . in Gotham County Council Division, a typical part of rural Rushcliffe and similar to many other areas where the Labour Party is beginning to break the hold of the Conservative Landowners.

We have eleven villages, and planned the tour to cover them in five weekdays, using the afternoons and evenings.

## Socialist Week

We distributed a leaflet, on the same lines as the theme of the exhibition, to each house the day before the caravan was planned to visit the village; at the same time we put up a few big "Labour for Britain" posters and a good number of sticky back bills announcing "Socialist Week. Look Out for the Mobile Exhibition." Our village League of Youth, and Local Party members' children helped to make a good job of this.

We arranged a rota of helpers in addition to the driver towing the caravan.

We went through the villages making many short stops; at each stop we first played a record over the loud-speaker, then briefly described the Exhibition, and invited people in. We made a point of telling them they would find in the Exhibition facts of what had actually been done by the Labour Government — Housing, National Insurance, etc., we also made a point of inviting people of any, or of no, political allegiance, thus giving a cover to nervous supporters, and a welcome and a challenge to others.

Only one helper was needed to deal with the Loudspeaker, the others at once set off to each house armed with

*For this campaign 20,000 leaflets were produced and distributed. Cost of the campaign was shared by the local parties and in the view of Tom Baxter, Regional Organiser, "it was very well worth while, though it would be wrong to say that large numbers of members were enrolled." Copies of the leaflet may be had from Mr. Baxter at 2s. per 1,000.*

pamphlets, these they sold or gave away, and personally invited people to the caravan, perhaps actually walking back with them and introducing them to the one in charge there.

## Pamphlets Sold

In this way we got a very good number into the Exhibition—the approach was friendly enough to bring people out with their aprons on and their children with them.

We were able to talk with many people we would otherwise meet only at rare intervals.

We were able to give or sell pamphlets describing different aspects of Labour policy or personal interest to people who would otherwise be unlikely to get such information.

We had the help of a great variety of members of the Branches and the League of Youth.

*We had a great deal of fun too—pushing the caravan like an unwieldy barrow down narrow streets where it was impossible to tow it—enlightening a number of Tory elders who were under the impression, despite loud-speaker, posters, and leaflets, that we were an electricity exhibition.*

We made only a few new members. I think almost entirely because we had made a good number a few weeks previously in house to house visiting in each village.

We did arouse a great deal of interest, and heard and discussed an amazing variety of facts and opinions, and gave some answer to a great many questions.

## Election Round-Up

A final check-up of the results in the November local elections in England and Wales shows that Labour's net gain was 196 seats. Majorities were won in Birmingham, Chesterfield, Peterborough, Oldbury, Colne, Wednesbury, Bolton, Bury, Newcastle-under-Lyme, South Shields, Stafford, Hartlepool and Plymouth—a total of 13.

Majorities were lost at Windsor, Llanelly, Chelmsford, Gravesend, Rawtenstall, and Dartmouth—a total of 6.

How three of our most successful parties in the elections—Birmingham, Eastbourne and Burnley—ran their campaigns is outlined in articles in this issue.

Mr. John Taylor, Scottish Secretary, sums up on the position in Scotland, where Labour made a net gain of 57 seats.

## Our Victory Plan

By JIM CATTERMOLE, Secretary, Birmingham B.L.P.

With power in its grasp Birmingham decided to go all out for power in the November elections, and it was felt that there could be no better method of achieving this than by fighting the elections on a common policy, with election addresses and publicity on a standardised basis, and by making the best use of our prominent speakers by allocating them from the central office.

In short, the desired results could best be obtained by all 35 candidates fighting as members of a team and not as individuals.

To this end the election campaign was planned by a Municipal Policy Committee, consisting of six representatives each from the Labour Group on the City Council and the Birmingham Borough Party Executive Committee. At the first meeting of this Committee the general principles for conducting the election campaign were laid down after very careful consideration had been given to possible methods the Tories might adopt for the campaign.

### Power for Labour

The strength of the City Council on 31st October was:—

Labour	...	...	...	67
Tory	...	...	...	66
Independent	...	...	...	3

which meant that while we were the largest single Party, we had not a majority over the combined opposition.

We felt, however, that the Tory campaign might attempt to persuade the electorate that Labour had been in power over the past twelve months and as a result were responsible for the policies carried out during that period. It was therefore decided at the outset to concentrate on asking the electorate to give us power and at the same time point out that we did not have a majority for the past year.

At the first meeting of this Policy Committee two Sub-Committees were appointed, one to deal with policy—the members of which consisted of the Secretary and Chairman of the Labour Group, the President of the Borough Party and the Labour Chairman of the Public Works Committee (which in Birmingham is the Committee responsible for house-building)—and the second to deal with publicity, comprised three members, all of whom were full-time agents who had had some experience in election publicity work. Both these Committees got to work and at the next meeting of the full Committee final details for the election were laid down.

### Slogan Posters

1. A coloured syndicated election address with space for photograph and personal message of each candidate to be produced centrally.
2. A leaflet on Housing, contrasting the Tory record after the 1914-18 war with the record of the Public Works Committee after this war

under the chairmanship of a Labour Alderman, with space for the ward to overprint if they so desired.

3. A coloured pictorial double-crown poster carrying the slogan "Give Labour Power to Get Things Done."
4. A series of five posters bearing slogans relative to Income Tax Relief, Family Allowances, Increased Old Age Pensions, Families Rehoused, and Houses under Construction. These "slogan" posters were produced to answer a Tory poster which had been widely displayed in the city for some months before the election carrying the slogan "Voted Labour? You've got it. Hard!" This was produced in red, white and blue, so ours were in exactly the same colours and read "Voted Labour? You've got it. 2,500,000 Received Family Allowances."

In connection with the election address, the Borough Party made themselves responsible for the entire production. The Wards only had to send to the office a photograph of the candidate and a 200-word personal message, and we did the rest.

#### "Town Crier" Helps

It was decided to ask the "Town Crier," which is Birmingham's Labour weekly, to publish a series of articles as follows:

1. "Housing." By the Chairman of the Committee responsible.
2. "The Redevelopment Areas." By the Chairman of the Committee responsible.
3. "Public Health." By the Chairman of the Committee responsible.
4. "Estates Committee." By the Chairman of the Committee responsible.
5. "Education." By a member of the Education Committee, giving a statement on Labour's approach to the 1944 Education Act.
6. An article by the Secretary of the Group, dealing with the rates and rating problems.

A special appeal was made to Wards and Trade Union organisations to take supplies of the papers carrying these articles to make sure they were distributed over as wide a field as possible.

#### Five-Point Address

The election address, of 800 or 900 words, it was decided to divide into five sections, these being, in order of priority, as follows:

Housing, Redevelopment Areas, Public Health, Education, Cultural Amenities in the City.

It was felt by the Committee that every elector must be interested in at least one of these five points. I would also point out that the Redevelopment Areas played an important part in the election campaign as Birmingham has recently promoted a Bill in the House of Commons giving wide powers for redevelopment in large areas of the centre which in all cover some 30,000 houses, and it was therefore considered important that our plans for the redevelopment of these areas should be given publicity.

As mentioned earlier, it was decided to allocate "star" speakers from the Borough Party Office to ensure that all the Wards in the City had an opportunity of having their services, and as a result the speakers for some fifty election meetings were arranged from the office.

#### Contact with Press

We also went to some trouble to make sure that all the candidates were adequately equipped with material covering the work of the more important Committees of the City Council, and to this end we produced no less than twenty closely-typed sheets of quarto notes for them.

Contact with the Press was maintained by the Borough Office and complete meeting lists were sent to the local papers for publication each day.

Candidates were asked to supply short extracts from their speeches and these were also sent to the Press every day.

Reports of progress of the election were given daily to reporters with the result that the Party had a good showing in the local Press, in spite of the fact that they are politically opposed to us, and on the eve of the poll we arranged for one evening paper to carry an 800-word article giving Labour's point of view.

*The results fully justified the preparations made, for Labour gained nine seats at the elections, which gave us a majority of sixteen on the Council.*

## Red Flag at Eastbourne

By Councillor W. J. BIGNELL,

Secretary, Eastbourne D.L.P.

The fact that a Labour majority has been won amongst the Councillors on the Eastbourne Town Council seems to have caused a mild sensation in Fleet Street, for several of the London dailies commented on the fact that the Red Flag was sung on the Town Hall steps after the results were declared. It was! We let it rip!

Actually, to anyone knowing the political set-up in the town the result can hardly have been a surprise. Throughout the war period seven of the 27 seats were in our hands. Last November our retiring Councillors were all returned, and in addition we gained four further seats. We secured another gain in a by-election in March, thus bringing our total to 12.

*The fact that we thus this November only needed two more gains for a Labour majority weighed heavily on our opponents' minds, so that this year for the first time they were openly backed by the Conservative Party machine. Perhaps their most valuable allies, however, were the local papers, the most influential of which devoted tremendous energies to trying to secure a Socialist defeat.*

Well, we won, and we are confident that we can hold our lead for two years, when we shall be able to secure aldermanic representation. Eastbourne's aldermanic bench is at present a perfect example of a Tory closed shop, which is the reason why, although we hold the people's mandate for such things as extended municipal trading, the development of light industries and a progressive housing programme, we still shall not be able to implement to the full our policy.

### Election Special

We fought throughout an orthodox campaign. The fight was launched with two big public meetings, one addressed by an M.P., the other by Eastbourne's last Labour General Election candidate, Major Duncan Smith. Thereafter, at planned intervals so as to secure the maximum press publicity, we held meetings in all the Wards we were contesting, these being addressed by the respective candidates, backed by an adequate panel of sitting councillors so as to cover all aspects of Town Council work.

In the field of literature, we put out

supplies of "Keep Lefts" and "Pull Togethers," and also locally produced attractively designed leaflets on Education and Light Industries. Perhaps our pièce de resistance was a well-printed local newspaper, the "Eastbourne Militant."

This was conceived as a last-minute stunt, and was available a week before polling day. We sold what copies we could, and any remaining we distributed free in key areas two days before the election. It was a costly venture, and of course we lost money on it, but it was enthusiastically welcomed by our supporters, and undoubtedly contributed greatly to our success.

On the question of general costs, we never let financial considerations deter us from doing anything which will contribute to victory. Past experience has amply demonstrated that if we spend the money we always get it in from somewhere or other.

Two things above all, however, made success possible. One is the constant flow of propaganda which we have put over, particularly since 1944, when our Local Party was re-born. No opportunity of stating Labour's case has been neglected, either by the spoken or written word.

### Concentrating Energies

Secondly, the distribution of population in the town is a material factor of some substance. Eastbourne is divided into nine Wards. From Labour's point of view three of these, being almost exclusively high-class residential or business neighbourhoods, are hopeless. This is not said in any defeatist spirit; it is a recognition of plain facts. Consequently, we do not strain our organisation at the moment by contesting them. Of the other six Wards, one is largely residential, but has a strong working-class colony; and the others are a mixture of working-class and residential properties in varying proportions, but much more in our favour.

It is on these six Wards that we have concentrated our energies. The first one has never yet returned a Labour Councillor, and our man suffered defeat this time, although he polled our highest ever for the Ward. It is in any case the largest Ward in the Borough, and when Ward boundaries are re-

defined, as they will be in the near future, the Ward should be a good thing for Labour.

Our immediate aim is to make the other five Wards solid for Labour, and we are near to achieving that target, for we now hold 14 of the 15 seats. It is perhaps noteworthy that one of the Wards had never up to last year returned a Labour Councillor. We now hold two of its three seats, and are hopeful of gaining the odd one next year.

*Such is the story of Eastbourne's journey along the road to success. On paper, there is nothing very exciting about it, but for those members of the Party who have borne the brunt of the struggle, it has been a crusade waged under great difficulties, often in the face of tremendous discouragements. To have got where we have is a proud achievement; but we shall not rest content until we have not only a Labour Council but also a Labour M.P.*

## Loudspeaker Was Our "Ace"

By J. W. KITCHEN, Secretary and Agent, Burnley L.P.

During the war any vacancy which occurred was filled by the Party to which the retiring candidate belonged, without a contest being held, the result of this was that we had in several wards four candidates, two Tory and two Labour. This, in 1945, gave us a problem, because we had in many wards two candidates, one with experience on the Council and one seeking election for the first time.

We decided to appoint a policy committee composed of members of the Labour Group to formulate local policy, who reported to the full Labour Group Meeting, who confirmed, amended or rejected their recommendations. The Policy Sub-Committee, along with four members of the Executive Council, met to consider the local elections, when it was decided that the usual practice of each candidate submitting his election address to the E.C. be dropped, and we issued an address from central office which was applicable to all candidates and was drawn up on party policy, incorporating local matters such as housing, health services, etc., in order of priority.

Each candidate was requested to submit to central office a personal message to the electorate, which was signed by both candidates, irrespective of whether he had had experience on the council or was seeking election for the first time. We thus sunk the individual and fought on a purely party basis. We had eighteen candidates in the field, and we were successful in getting fifteen out of the eighteen candidates returned, thus capturing control of the

Council. In the by-elections which followed as a result of the Aldermanic elections we pursued the same policy, and won the by-elections, thus consolidating our majority.

### Meetings Over-rated

The method adopted in 1945 was so successful that we saw no reason for a change, which again proved correct. We held the three seats we were defending and captured three seats from the Tories, thus strengthening our majority. The other part of the election was carried out in the usual manner, canvassing, distribution of literature (having obtained a good supply of that excellent publication "Pull Together," from Head Office), holding of meetings in support of our candidates, but I think the value of meetings is over-rated as a rule. They are very sparsely attended and you can only get your message over to the few who attend, especially so if you have only a Tory press for reports.

We tried the loudspeaker, and we find it very effective, as you get your message over to a much larger proportion of the electorate. They will come to the door and listen to what you have to say, when they won't attend a meeting. The speaker is very effective on polling day for going into the streets to remind them that it is polling day, which saves a lot of time on the knocker. To get the best out of this method you require two or three cars to take the people to the poll. There is, in fact, a great future for the loud-speaker in local as well as parliamentary elections, which up to the present has not been made full use of.

# The Highlands Go Labour

By JOHN TAYLOR, Scottish Secretary

As a result of the Burgh Council elections of November 5th, 1946, Labour gained 93 seats and lost 36—a net gain of 57.

New Labour majorities were secured in six Burghs—Hamilton, Irvine, Fort William, Loanhead, Cockenzie and Port Seton and Bonnyrigg and Lasswade.

In six other burghs the Labour groups are exactly equal in strength to the combined opposition. Labour now controls 39 burghs, plus two in which Labour is in a 50-50 position but can exercise control by virtue of the casting vote of Labour Provosts. Prior to the election we controlled 36 authorities.

*Most of the large burghs are now Labour controlled, including three of the four counties of cities. In the fourth—Edinburgh—only five more seats have to be won to attain a majority—a remarkable achievement in the residential and largely middle-class capital.*

### C.P. and I.L.P. Intervene

These results are even better than the figures indicate, for there were larger numbers of Communist Party candidates than ever before, and some awkward I.L.P. candidates just where they would do most harm.

The Communists were routed everywhere. Their polls were so low that their intervention lost us only 11 seats and prevented us from winning 10 more. Their confident bombast during the campaign that they were out to "capture the Councils" reminded one of the boast of the fly which captured the fly-paper.

They did, however, cost us two majorities—in Bathgate and Musselburgh—where their votes, though microscopic, were just sufficient to enable Tories to scrape home.

### Not One Conservative!

Borough Council elections in England and Wales are held on the first day of November, unless that day falls on a Sunday. Burgh Council elections in Scotland are held on the first Tuesday in November. Therefore, polling day

in Scotland is later than in England except in those years in which the 1st November falls on a Tuesday.

In England anti-Labour candidates often accept Party labels and stand openly as Conservatives or Liberals. In Scotland they disguise themselves as "Progressives," "Moderates," or, quaintly, as "Independents." In all Scotland there was not a solitary Conservative honest enough to carry the label of his party.

Alarmed at the spectacular Labour wins last year these non-political politicians began to organise themselves this year and decided that their chief line would be a serious warning to the electorate against the domination of Local Government by a soulless Party machine! "No Party Dictation in Local Government" was the theme of their highly organised campaign, with horrible examples of the terrible effects of alleged "government by caucus."

This campaign failed because it was overdone. The spectacle of an obviously organised group protesting against the principle of organised groups left them wide open to ridicule—a fatal thing in electioneering.

### Highland Burghs Captured

Last year, when Labour won nearly 200 seats, the B.B.C. news bulletins made no mention of the Scottish results. This year they did mention them but gave no indication of the Labour gains, concentrating on the places where Labour seats had been lost, and creating the general impression that we had not come out of the affair too well.

The Scottish press followed a similar line. In fact, so relieved were they that their losses were not so heavy as last year that they claimed "The Turn of the Tide" in banner headlines. Two more years of this kind of tide-turning and Labour will control practically all the burghs in Scotland.

*There was, however, a slight tide-turning in the Highlands, where it has flowed strongly for the Tories even in 1945. Labour victories in Fort William (where we won a majority) and Inverness show a tide-turning in Labour's favour just where it is most needed.*

# Retirals of Councillors Statutory Rules and Orders

1946 No. 1676

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS, ENGLAND

The Local Elections (Supplementary Provisions) (No. 2) Order, 1946, dated October 16, 1946, made by the Secretary of State under Section 12 of the Representation of the People Act, 1945 (8 & 9 Geo. 6. c. 5).

(Home Office, 16th October, 1946).

1.—(1) This Order may be cited as the Local Elections (Supplementary Provisions) (No. 2) Order, 1946.

(2) This Order shall not extend to Scotland.

2.—(1) Where a casual vacancy occurs or has occurred within six months before the first or second anniversary of the appropriate date in the office of councillor of a borough or an urban district and the councillor in respect of whose office the vacancy occurs or has occurred would, but for the vacancy, have retired on the first or second anniversary of the appropriate date, as the case may be, that councillor shall, for the purpose of the rotation in thirds provision and sub-section (3) of section five of the Representation of the People Act, 1945, be deemed to continue or to have continued in office until the first or second anniversary of the appropriate date, as the case may be.

## WHAT IT MEANS

(2) In this Article the expression "appropriate date" means—

- (a) in relation to a borough, the first day of November, 1945; and
- (b) in relation to an urban district, the fifteenth day of April, 1946.

3. Where an election to fill a casual vacancy in the office of councillor of a borough or an urban district is combined with the ordinary election of councillors to be held in the case of a borough in the year nineteen hundred and forty-six and in the case of an urban district in the year nineteen hundred and forty-seven or is held after that ordinary election and before the next following ordinary election, the councillor elected to fill the casual vacancy shall, notwithstanding anything in sub-section (3) of section five of the Representation of the People Act, 1945, hold office until the date upon which the person in whose place he is elected would, but for the casual vacancy, have retired, and shall then retire.

## NOTE

The interpretation of the above would seem to be:

(2) That where a casual vacancy occurs within six months of an ordinary election at which the original councillor would have been due to retire, this shall become an ordinary vacancy and shall count for the third of the council due to be elected.

(3) That from November 1st, 1946, and after (for boroughs) and from the next spring elections (for districts) a councillor elected to fill a casual vacancy shall hold office only until his predecessor would have had to retire.



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